

It was Louisville



UNPAVED STREETS, as shown in this scene on Main Street looking east from 4th, still were common in 1895 in spite of an otherwise metropolitan appearance.



THE OLD AND THE NEW—buggies and early automobiles—showed in this 1910 picture of City Hall. The automobiles are the city's first police patrol cars.

of an approaching railroad train, a tornado bore down upon Louisville.

The tornado, cutting a wide swath through the countryside as it approached, struck the west end, then known as Parkland, and there did its most severe damage. The wind followed a fairly narrow path across the city, but left devastation in its wake.

A recap of damage showed 120 persons dead and property damage of more than \$2,000,000. Five churches, the depot, three schools, 32 factories, and 500 homes had been lost in Louisville's worst disaster.

The financial panic came three years later, in 1893. The crisis reached its peak nationally in July when many banks suspended payments. Following so closely a similar crisis in 1891, there was great uneasiness in Louisville at first and business came to a virtual standstill.

But the Louisville Clearing House, which had been organized in 1875 as an association of all standard banks in the city, came to the relief of many shaky financial institutions in temporary distress by guaranteeing their credit.

Thus, through the efforts of a local organization, the panic was much less severe in Louisville than elsewhere in the country.

Neither the tornado nor the depression could more than delay for a short time only the progressive revolution, much of it dependent on electricity, that was underway in Louisville.

The first skyscraper in Louisville—indeed, in the South—the Columbia Building at 4th and Main, was nearing completion when the 1890 tornado ripped through the heart of the city. Strangely, the structure was not damaged by the twister, and it remained to become an object of great discussion and neck-craning because of its breath-taking height—10 full stories.

Two other important events took place in 1890—Louisville played Brooklyn in the World Series, and the city park system was born.

The World Series—actually an interleague playoff between the two top teams in the old Federal League—never was concluded. It was called off with the teams tied 7-7 in the decisive seventh game when a mid-October blizzard hit Brooklyn, where the last three games were played.

Louisville had gone East with a 2-1 edge, thanks to a pair of pitching victories turned in by Red Ehret. In spite of another win by Ehret, Brooklyn evened the series at three games each.

Only 300 fans turned out for the final game when the temperature dropped to near freezing. A light snow fell throughout most of the game, and finally the whole thing was halted, never to be resumed, at the end of the ninth inning with the score tied.

The creation of the City park system was the culmination of years of talking and hoping. Although Clark, in his original plat of Louisville, had suggested space for public parks